

Charlotte Hosts Citywide Corporate Challenge

Initiative in Brief

Employees from 14 Charlotte, Michigan businesses recently competed in a corporate challenge. The *Charlotte Health Challenge* was coordinated by Dawn Rodman, HGB Wellness Center, and the Business and Professional Committee at Hayes Green Beach Memorial Hospital. Rodman credits local business owners and leaders for choosing "employee health" as this year's community activity. "Business leaders are concerned about the high cost of health care, and wanted to take action to help employees become and stay healthy," says Rodman.

The participants of the six-week challenge used the web-based pedometer program *America on the Move* (AOM) to log their daily steps. Coordinators at each worksite had the ability to access their worksite's aggregate data. The aggregate data was submitted to Rodman, and bi-weekly challenge standings were posted on the AOM website.

Rodman listed "raised awareness" as one of the challenge benefits. Participants became aware of how much they really did move in a day and put in extra steps if they were falling short of their goal, and non-participants would ask about the pedometers hanging from colleagues' waistbands. The posters displayed in participating businesses that explained to customers why employees were wearing tennis shoes, also sent the message that the businesses were concerned with health. One downtown business joined the program, because a participating business "raised their awareness" and challenged them to get involved.

Rodman's greatest compliment of the program was that it offered all employees the ability to participate. "Many times the people that get involved in corporate challenges are the people that are already physically active. This program engages all fitness levels," she said. Information on AOM can be found at www.americaonthemove.org.

Benefits

- It raised awareness of how much or how little an individual moves during the day.
- It built camaraderie among co-workers and within families, and challenged other businesses to become involved.
- The friendly competition motivated some participants to "get moving."

"When I decided to represent our team, it was both for a team effort and a personal goal. Every day I tried to stretch my steps by following all the little tips I got from the AOM emails. When I got home, if I was not at or above my daily goal, I would take my two dogs for a walk in the farm field behind our home. Thanks for setting up the AOM for Charlotte. I feel better in my clothes and have more energy!"

Lydia McCauley, Account Executive
AOM Local Team Coordinator
Russell & Schrader Insurance Agency, Inc.

Lessons Learned

- Support and participation from business leadership improves the likelihood that the program will be a success.
- Choose a program that speaks to all employees, and perhaps their family members, not just the employees who currently are physically active.
- Offer incentives for participation. Some businesses awarded prizes for signing up, logging steps every day, and adhering to deadlines. This gives everyone a chance to earn a prize, not just those who may have the most steps.

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Cost: Approximately \$12/employee, not including coordinator's time or incentives
Risk Factor: Physical inactivity
Impact/Reach: 500 participants from 14 local businesses
Business/Sector: Education, government, health care, small business